

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04035 181321Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4035

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LE
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON--CALL BY LEBANESE PARLIAMENTARY
DELEGATION

1. I HAVE JUST (1100 LOCAL AUG 18) BEEN WAITED UPON BY PARLIA-
MENTARY DELEGATION OF FIVE DEPUTIES WHO CONSTITUTE THE NATIONAL
FRONT FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE SOUTH (DR. RAFIQ SHAHIN, ABDUL
LATIF AL ZEIN, MAHMOUD AMMAR, MOHAMED BEYDOUN, SAYED HUSSIN
HUSSEINI). THE BURDEN OF THEIR MESSAGE WAS TO ASK WHAT THE U.S.
WAS PREPARED TO DO ABOUT THE SOUTH. THEY DESCRIBED THE SITUATION
AS DETERIORATING DAILY UNDER CONTINUING ARTILLERY ATTACKS ON
NABATIYA AND OTHER SHIA TOWNS. THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA WERE
REDUCED TO SUCH STRAITS THAT THEY WERE TALKING OF ASKING THE
ISRAELIS TO COME IN AND HELP THEM (THIS IS NOT A NEW THEME).
THE DELEGATION SAID RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ARTILLERY EXCHANGES
SEEMED TO BE SHARED JOINTLY BY ISRAEL AND REJECTIONISTS, BOTH
OF WHOM, THE DELEGATION CLAIMED, HAD AN INTEREST IN
KEEPING THE SITUATION ALONG THE BORDER UNSTABLE IN ORDER
TO SABOTAGE AMERICAN PEACE EFFORTS. ABDUL LATIF AL ZEIN
REPEATED STANDARD ACCUSATION THAT THE PALESTINIANS AND
ISRAELIS ARE IN CAHOOTS IN THIS RESPECT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04035 181321Z

2. I TOLD THEM WE WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE
SOUTH. WE REALIZED THE SITUATION WAS SERIOUS AND
HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF LEBANON, ISRAEL
AND SYRIA ON THE SUBJECT CONSTANTLY OVER THE PAST SIX
MONTHS. WE HAD USED OUR INFLUENCE WITH THESE GOVERNMENTS
TO ATTEMPT TO FIND A SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEM. WE HAD
URGED RESTRAINT ON THE ISRAELIS. WE HAD STATED OUR

WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT A REQUEST FOR UN FORCES IF NEEDED.
WE WERE ENDEAVORING TO ASSIST THE LEBANESE ARMY. THE
BASIC PROBLEM HAD BEEN ABSENCE IN PAST OF A LEBANESE
MILITARY FORCE CAPABLE OF POLICING THE AREA. AT ISSUE
WAS LEBANESE COVEREIGNTY OVER THE REGION.

3. I SAID UN TROOP PROPOSAL WAS UP TO THE LEBANESE
GOVERNMENT BUT THERE WERE VARIOUS REASONS WHY IT HAD NOT
REQUESTED THE FORCE; AMONG THEM WAS THE FACT THAT THE
SYRIANS WERE LUKEWARM ON THE PROPOSAL BECAUSE THEY DID NOT
WANT TO INTERNATIONALIZE A PALESTINE/LEBANESE DISPUTE.
SECOND POINT WAS THAT EXISTENCE OF UN TROOPS ALONG THE
BORDER WOULD NOT BY ITSELF SOLVE BASIC PROBLEM RESULTING FROM
PALESTINIAN CONTROL OF THE REGION. CONFLICT BETWEEN THE
PALESTINIANS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH WOULD REMAIN.
WE THOUGHT BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE THE ENTRY OF
LEBANESE TROOPS INTO AREA. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT GENERAL
KHOURY WAS TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS PREPARATORY TO
SUCH A MOVE. THE PROBLEM WAS THEY COULD NOT MOVE IN UNLESS
AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON WITHDRAWAL OF THE PALESTINIANS.
DID THEY THINK THE PALESTINIANS WOULD WITHDRAW?

4. DEPUTIES INDICATED CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO THE
PALESTINIAN BONA FIDES. NEVERTHELESS THEY ACCEPTED THE
IDEA THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SUBJECT WERE CONTINUING AND
THEY HOPED LEBANESE FORCES WOULD MOVE INTO THE AREA. THEY
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04035 181321Z

ASKED WHEN THAT WOULD HAPPEN AND I SAID THEY SHOULD ASK THE
LEBANESE ARMY, NOT ME. THEY ASKED WHAT ASSURANCES WE COULD
GIVE ABOUT ISRAELI ACTIONS, AND I SAID I THOUGHT
WE COULD ASSURE THEM ISRAELIS WOULD USE RESTRAINT.

5. COMMENT THIS WAS A HIGHLY ADVERTISED VISIT AND THE
DEPUTIES MET WITH JOURNALISTS AS THEY LEFT THE EMBASSY.
GOD KNOWS WHAT THEY TOLD THEM. I AM IMPRESSED, HOWEVER, WITH
THE FACT THAT WHILE EVERYBODY TALKS ABOUT PROTECTING THE
CHRISTIANS, NOBODY SEEMS TO PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO PROTECTING
THE SHIA. THE MORALE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN THE SOUTH MAY BE
BAD: THAT OF THE SHIA IS MUCH WORSE.
PARKER

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NNN

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